

GSFC  
Recruitment  
Strategy

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## Overview

Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) is a global leader in Earth science, astrophysics, heliophysics and planetary science. As a NASA field center, GSFC holds the highest apportion of NASA civil servant FTE; approximately 3393. Encompassing 5 different locations with facilities in Maryland, New York, Virginia, West Virginia and New Mexico, GSFC is an instrumental player in the NASA mission by providing innovative science and technological discoveries. The Greenbelt campus is situated between Baltimore and the nation's capitol, making it uniquely positioned to receive continuous support from both NASA HQ and the state of Maryland. GSFC has the opportunity to draw from backyard talent with colleges such as University of Maryland College Park, Johns Hopkins, Bowie State, Capitol College, Morgan State, University of Maryland Baltimore County, University of Maryland Eastern Shore and Howard University all located within a short drive. Furthermore, GSFC locations are very attractive to scientists and engineers.

In 2010, Maryland ranked second in the U.S. in the fields of technology and science, and first in human capital investment (Milken Institute index). *Human capital investment is determined by creating a population average of SAT and ACT test scores, state education appropriations and spending, as well as academic degrees, particularly in the fields of engineering and sciences.*<sup>1</sup>

Maryland has the highest concentration of employed doctoral scientists and engineers and ranks first in employed PhD scientists and engineers per 100,000 employed workers. Maryland also ranks first in mathematical sciences (60), first in biological sciences (367), first in health (66), and third in physical sciences (193) per 100,000 employed workers.<sup>2</sup> The ability of the state to draw S&E talent is a great opportunity for GSFC to tout and take full advantage of the associated benefits of this dynamic workforce.

## Purpose of Strategic Recruitment

The GSFC recruitment strategy integrates all Center initiatives associated with recruiting a highly talented and diverse pool of permanent employees, co-op students and interns for various student programs. This requires greater strategic cooperation, collaboration and partnership specifically with Goddard's Office of Human Capital Management and the Office of Education in addition to working directly with Center Directorates, and the Equal Opportunity Programs Office and Diversity Programs.

**To support the recruitment goal of attracting the best candidates for GSFC positions, the Center will:**

- Maintain a balanced annual recruitment schedule emphasizing continuous cycle recruitment
- Utilize the workforce planning and new business processes as a method of identifying critical GSFC competencies
- Provide a highly qualified and diverse applicant pool to GSFC hiring managers
- Work with various Center partners to customize recruitment plans when hiring mid/senior level employees
- Ensure that GSFC fully utilizes current student pipeline talent to meet work requirements

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.msa.md.gov/msa/mdmanual/01glance/html/employ.html>

<sup>2</sup> National Science Foundation, data for 2003, and U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## Key Partnerships & Stakeholders

There are several relationships with Center partners that are integral to the success of overall GSFC recruitment strategy objectives:

Office of the Director (specifically Deputy Director for Science and Technology & Associate Center Director)  
Office of Education  
Equal Opportunities Program Office  
Directorate Offices  
Diversity Offices & Advisory Committees  
Human Capital Representatives  
Office of Communications

### **Balanced Continuous Cycle Recruitment**

In light of current FTE constraints, shrinking budgets and the highly competitive nature of S&E recruitment, balanced continuous cycle recruitment should be the foundation of the GSFC recruitment strategy. Typical recruitment at the federal level often involves waiting for vacancies to occur before an advertisement is announced. This appears to be the most logical method of obtaining talent, unfortunately it's not the most effective. One problem that often plagues federal agencies is the inability to locate talented candidates during a short window of time once a hiring need has been identified. This is when the concept of continuous cycle recruitment proves its worth. This method is based on the fact that recruitment of core critical competencies never has an "off switch".

#### **Tactical Plan**

- Incorporate competency needs and succession planning into annual recruitment plans
- Utilize Workforce Quarterly discussions with directorates to gain insight into hiring needs
- Capitalize on the two recruitment cycles/seasons; fall (September to November) and spring (January to April) using a balanced mix of recruitment events would include information sessions, career fairs and informal GSFC candidate visits

### **Linking Critical Competencies with Mission Objectives**

GSFC has a specific role to play within the overall NASA mission. Center work requirements call for a balanced mix of science, engineering and business/professional administrative personnel. Major occupations are defined as mission-related and heavily populated, relative to other occupations within the agency. These occupations contain 100 or more employees whose jobs are mission related.<sup>3</sup>

- Aerospace Engineer
- Computer Engineer/Scientist
- General Engineer
- Electronics Engineer (includes Electrical Engineer)
- Space Science
- Earth Science
- Contracts & Procurement

These competencies should always be sought out---even during periods of limited permanent hiring. During such periods, effective student pipeline management is critical.

<sup>3</sup> <http://ohcm.gsfc.nasa.gov/wfstatistics/Parity/home.htm>

### **Tactical Plan**

- OHCM will utilize the recently developed list of critical competencies for the purpose of targeted recruitment efforts.
- OHCM will utilize the New Business processes to identify critical competencies needed to capture new work at the Center. Time Frame: Ongoing

### **Creating a Diverse Applicant Pool**

Employee hiring should be one of the most important elements within a supervisor's realm of responsibilities. It is a critical component of their role and not simply an administrative function. As a hiring manager with the ability to shape the GSFC workforce, this privilege should be exercised with both caution and concern.

Managers will be held accountable for the quality of all new hires and should in-turn hold OHCM accountable for ensuring that they are delivering a diverse and highly qualified applicant pool.

The Office of Personnel Management has provided agencies with many methods meant to increase diversity of civil servant applicant pools through various hiring authorities. Some hiring authorities available to hiring managers are;

Outstanding Scholar

Bilingual/Bicultural

Schedule A (applicants with disabilities, attorneys, non-citizens)

Schedule B

Schedule C

Schedule D (non-competitive selection of Co-op's, Stay-in-School)

Veterans Recruitment Appointment

Creative use of various hiring authorities is merely a method of actually reaching the applicants who appear on certificates. The responsibility of recruiting diverse applicants for current and future GSFC vacancies is shared between the hiring manager, their respective HR specialist(s), the student program manager and the recruitment manager. Through joint participation and consistent communication during the hiring process, significant strides towards diversity in hiring can be achieved. All parties involved should keep diversity in mind when making decisions and ensure that if an outsider examines the process, they can be confident in the integrity of their actions.

It is important to note that diversity comes in many different forms and is not limited to gender and ethnicity. Other examples of diversity include; physical ability, sexual orientation, regional upbringing, socio-economic status, age and education. OHCM works closely with GSFC advisory councils representing many of these categories during the preparation of annual recruitment schedules. When coordinating annual recruitment schedules, events should be chosen with an emphasis on leveraging resources and shared participation during logistical planning. While OHCM maintains authority over recruitment planning, the mutual understanding of GSFC mission objectives will ultimately determine the final direction of yearly recruitment activities.

<u>Persons with Disabilities</u>	<u>Persons with Targeted Disabilities</u>	<u>Veterans</u>	<u>Disabled Veterans</u>
7% of Total Workforce	2% of Total Workforce	14.9% of Hires	7.5% of Hires
EOY 2016	Ongoing	Annual	Annual

### **Disability Recruitment Tactical Plan**

Issued July 26, 2010, Executive Order 13548 states: Executive departments and agencies (agencies) must improve their efforts to employ workers with disabilities through increased recruitment, hiring, and retention of these individuals. GSFC is committed to supporting the recruitment, hiring and retention of employees with targeted disabilities, as defined by the Office of Personnel Management (<http://www.opm.gov/disability/appempl.asp>)

Recent efforts include:

- (External) Establish long term relationships with:
  - Educational institutions and disability organizations
  - State Departments of Rehabilitation Services
  - Social networking sites, i.e., Facebook
  - Broader disability community events
  - Disability talent recruitment organizations, i.e., Bender Consulting Services
- (Internal) Maintain relationships with:
  - GSFC Equal Opportunity Programs Office, Disability Program Manager
  - Key Directorate managers and Administrative Officers
  - NASA Office of Human Capital Management
  - NASA Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity
- Identify candidates and assist in the candidate qualification process in conjunction with code 113 personnel
- Refer candidates to hiring managers

### **Veterans Recruitment Tactical Plan**

On November 9, 2009, Executive Order 13518 – Employment of Veterans in the Federal Government was signed by President Obama.

- Called for enhanced recruitment of and promoted employment opportunities for veterans within the federal government.
- Established the Council on Veterans Employment; membership consisted of all Executive agency heads.

GSFC is committed to supporting the recruitment, hiring and retention of U.S. veterans who are a good fit for available positions based on skill sets and leadership experiences acquired during their military tenure that are highly desirable and transferable. Veteran recruitment efforts include:

- Establish long term relationships with high school JROTC units. The two particular schools that we will focus on are Eleanor Roosevelt high school and Charles Flower high school.
- Establish relationships with local college and university student veteran's organizations. Visit and establish relationships with military district of Washington installations and their TAP programs.
- Engage Veterans Advisory Committee to support veteran specific recruitment events
- Engage Washington-area Veterans Hospitals to recruit disabled veterans.
- Continue to utilize the Operation WarFighter program at Walter Reed Medical Center

### **Middle/Senior/Executive Level Recruitment**

GSFC is a unique place where scientists and engineers work alongside professional administrative staff. The GS pay scales are varied based on the profession with most middle to senior scientists and engineers falling between the GS-12 to GS-15 ranges. In instances where vacancies at the ST, SL or SES levels, The Office of the Center Director will work very closely with various deputy directors to recruit top talent. In certain scenarios The Center Director will solicit industry peers and colleagues to engage and encourage potential SES candidates to consider GSFC vacancies. When faced with the task of hiring for vacated positions, S&E managers often place a high emphasis on advanced education. While this is fully within their realm of control, it can at times result in candidate pools lacking in diversity and quality. It is during these times that increased communication is required between hiring managers and OHCM personnel. Another method would be to target specific companies, organizations, federal agencies and universities to actively recruit currently employed professionals. In short, the recruitment of potential employees is a wide-ranging subject that is most successful when hiring managers are upfront and honest with their respective requirements. If a hiring manager knows that he or she would prefer to hire a veteran who is a former member of the Army Corps of Engineers, they should be comfortable with the fact that such a request is certainly open for consideration. The practice of requesting pre-identified candidates, also known as "name requests", is widely used at GSFC. It's also common for hiring managers to select employees of various contract support companies for federal employment. These are viable options for all hiring managers that can and should be fully articulated to OHCM personnel as part of an overall comprehensive recruitment program, without fear of reprisal.

Recruitment and hiring at middle and senior levels is best achieved when managers work closely with OHCM personnel. OHCM personnel exist solely to support many of the Agency programs that most hiring managers are busy leading.

#### **Tactical Plan**

- Customized recruitment strategies will be utilized to reach external candidates with unique skills through various sourcing methods. One of which being the utilization of web-based sourcing tools (LinkedIn, The Ladders, DICE, Monster, etc.)
- Application of succession management analysis and critical competency assessments to drive recruitment initiatives

### **Student Pipeline Management**

In November 2009, President Obama launched an "Educate to Innovate" campaign to improve the participation and performance of America's students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). This campaign will include efforts not only from the Federal Government but also from leading companies, foundations, non-profits, and science and engineering societies to work with young people across America to

excel in science and math.<sup>4</sup> This commitment was a strong endorsement of many current NASA education programs which include various summer internships, fellowships and grants.

Consequently, GSFC hires in excess of 400 students each summer into its many education programs. Upon entry, these students become members of the GSFC student pipeline; a starting point for many future members of the Center's workforce. Center management should capitalize on this investment by valuing interns as integral components of the long-term workforce strategy. Effective communication and coordination between Education student program managers and OHCM student program managers regarding the marketing of promising students is an important component in building a successful pipeline. Equally important is communication between managers and students about available work assignments to help maximize resources and improve Center return on investment.

The NASA One Stop Shopping Initiative is an agency-wide integrated system to engage students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM, research, aerospace education, and space exploration. The organizations chosen to comprise the Broker Facilitator Corps are the Institute for Broadening Participation of Damariscotta, Maine; the United Negro College Fund Special Program of Falls Church, Va.; the Hispanic College Fund Inc. of Washington; and the American Indian Higher Education Consortium of Alexandria, Va.

### **Tactical Plan**

- Jointly host a minimum of one large scale event for summer interns
- Broadly disseminate student application process information
- Support Project LEAD (Business, Engineering, and Global) by sharing Goddard diversity partner contacts
- Strive to reach a majority of Co-Op opportunities for current or previous student interns
- Crosswalk opportunities for leveraging and supporting events; jointly and separately
- Purposefully engage all Goddard sites (WFF, IVV, GISS) in plans and processes
- Use the bi-weekly Education Pipeline Committee meetings to refine strategy for student programs and workforce recruitment
- Develop information/materials that can be shared with all Center partners (i.e. "Go with Goddard" flyer)
- Develop a consistent/coordinated approach to engage Goddard directorates in recruitment decisions
- Develop a systematic approach to recruitment that engages OHCM, Education, EEO, and Diversity as policy partners
- Develop a targeted recruitment plan for constituents both internal and external to Goddard
- Continuously monitor usage of student programs and conversion rates to determine success rates to continue student pipeline
- Engage with STEM-related professional organizations at the local, state and national levels to build relationships with these entities in order to facilitate information exchange
- Leverage Pathways Program to develop pipeline mechanisms as a strategic approach to hiring scientists and engineers

GSFC has recently utilized various web related mediums to support multiple recruitment and outreach needs. These include Twitter and Facebook. These mediums are very important to reaching target audiences who do not always rely solely on traditional methods of obtaining data. In an attempt to stream-line the web presence and GSFC will greatly benefit from sharing resources in the areas of recruitment, education and public outreach.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-education-innovate-campaign>

A bold recruitment strategy should include strong partnerships and joint participation in Center and Agency activities. The Office of Public Affairs and OHCM should maintain frequent communications and be aware of each others' activities and schedules. It is imperative that in a time of limited funding that GSFC partners work together to explore innovative and creative methods to reach new and often ignored audiences.

Most present day methods used to articulate the GSFC mission and recruit the future workforce are greatly influenced by the web. While this is an effective way to empower people and provide them with the opportunity to decide if GSFC is a place where they would like to work, personal opinions and public perception often leave far lasting impressions on potential candidates. Word-of-mouth marketing is an excellent way to spread the Goddard story. GSFC is a unique and exciting place to work and that sentiment should not be tampered down. Center employees should feel encouraged to tell neighbors and people within their communities about the types of work objectives that they complete. Hiring managers should be able to call or email a professor to share information and inquire about promising students. The positive buzz that is created when employees start to tell the Goddard story can become a consistent catalyst for maintaining continued interest in Center activities. Recruitment should not be limited to OHCM, every GSFC employee has the ability to reach and possibly encourage promising individuals to explore Center job opportunities.

In addition to employee marketing, GSFC should capitalize on all positive recognitions currently being received. The Partnership for Public Service provides an outstanding resource devoted to federal agencies each year through its *Best Places to Work in the Federal Government* rankings listing created every two years. NASA has an overall ranking of 5<sup>th</sup> out of 30 federal agencies.

#### **Tactical Plan**

- Continue update and enhance the Center recruitment webpage <http://recruitment.gsfc.nasa.gov>
- Create a SATERN based training module to better prepare recruiters prior to participating in recruitment events
- Use various external vendors as a method of reaching larger audiences, i.e. local radio stations, LEAD, Linked-In
- Benchmark other government agencies and private industry to identify innovative approaches
- Leverage Agency relationships with outside entities, i.e. Partnership for Public Service and Job Choices magazine
- Leverage Office of Communications

#### **Advisory Committees**

The OHCM partners with the Center's advisory committees to identify recruitment opportunities and enhance recruitment efforts by leveraging the relationships they have with Center personnel and with their respective communities. The Center advisory committees include:

African American Advisory Committee (AAAC)  
 Asian Pacific American Advisory Committee (APAAC)  
 Women's Advisory Committee (WAC)  
 Equal Accessibility Advisory Committee (EAAC)  
 Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual and Transgender Advisory Committee (GLBTAC)  
 Hispanic Advisory Committee for Employees (HACE)  
 Native American Advisory Committee (NAAC)  
 Veterans Advisory Committee (VAC)  
 New & Developing Professionals Advisory Committee (NDPAC)

### Role of Advisory Committees

- Actively assist the Center in its recruitment efforts by serving as recruiters on select recruitment trips and conducting outreach activities that help broaden recruitment efforts
- Recommend improvements to recruiting materials to make them more relevant (i.e., updating material, printing in Spanish)
- Provide input to the development of the annual recruitment schedule of events

## Measurement and Evaluation

Upon completion of each fiscal year, measurement and analysis of recruitment investments should be performed. Costs associated with advertising, recruitment travel, career fair registration fees and other logistical costs should be monitored to ensure effective use of resources. OHCM personnel should communicate regularly to ensure that recruited candidates are appearing on certificates and are receiving status updates throughout the application process. Collaboration between recruitment and staffing personnel is imperative. Effective partnerships among OHCM personnel and hiring managers can greatly improve the recruitment and hiring process.

### Tactical Plan

- Explore various tools which can be utilized to measure and track applicants, examples include; surveys, diversity/demographic questionnaires and application volume tracking
- Analyze and measure where people are viewing the recruitment webpage and determine what other web pages may be leading them to <http://recruitment.gsfc.nasa.gov>

## Conclusion

This document should serve as a guide to shape annual recruitment plans and activities. Recruitment at GSFC will remain a critical component of the overall workforce strategy. The costs associated with competing for top-talent will continue to increase. If GSFC is going to keep pace with competing companies and organizations, current budget levels may not suffice. Ideally, most Center recruitment activities will include input from Center stakeholders. In addition to intra-center activities, GSFC will continue to advance Agency recruitment objectives through strong partnerships with external field center colleagues. Our goal should be to maximize Agency resources to the ultimate benefit of getting the best candidates into the Goddard workforce.